Mixing and Mingling Queerly: The Activist Sociality of Mentoring in the Personal Narratives of Coloma and Lorde

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ABSTRACT   Edward Chamberlain takes on the pressing need for mentorship for queer youth, in particular queer youth of color. Addressing a dearth in both studies on and commitment to the wellness and flourishing of queer youth of color in institutions of higher learning, Chamberlain turns to what is in some respects both a traditional and nontraditional archive of resources: personal narrative writing by queer people of color. Taking up both Audre Lorde's Zami: A New Spelling of My Name and Roland Sintos Coloma's "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves," Chamberlain argues that the structural hybridity of these narratives serves as a formal model for a queer mentoring methodology, and delves into the texts themselves for examples of how to mentor queer youth of color in and beyond the academy.

Introduction: Understanding the Challenges and Stories of Queer Youth of Color

In recent decades, numerous critics have suggested there is a pressing need to provide more mentoring to young people due to how many youth of various ancestries say they lack role models as well as encounter conflicts with family, peer groups, and institutions.[1] In particular, one of the youth populations that has vocalized a need for guidance and support are youth of color who self-identify themselves as bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ).[2] In a piecemeal manner, several American organizations and schools have attempted to address the concerns and questions that these young people face by trying to find mentors who can help these populations. However, there is still considerable resistance among community leaders and school administrators, who have rejected the attempts to publicly support the so-called non-traditional feelings, identities, and interests of such youth.[3] Some cynics may contend that a queer-positive approach to mentoring is incompatible with public-serving organizations and schools due to many communities' traditions, which generally militate against initiatives of social change. Conversely some educators now are expressing a greater interest in addressing these issues for the sake of creating a more inclusive and safe environs for students and staff. The debate over how to mentor and who should be involved in the mentoring process rages on; but there is ample evidence in diverse forms, such as personal narratives, that suggest there are multitudinous benefits to making mentorship more *queerly* inclusive, especially for vulnerable populations.

Although this modality of mentoring queer youth has received more attention in the past decade, the experience of mentoring sexual minorities is discernible in the autobiographies and personal narratives from decades earlier—a time period in which queer activists and other civil rights groups assembled coalitions to advance their socio-political aims as well as safeguarding the well-being of at-risk groups. Cultural researchers have shown that activists pursued this coalitional approach as they realized the lives of

queer people were being undercut by systemic forms of bias, inequality, privilege, and rigid binarisms that are perpetuated by the ingrained laws, policies, and standards of US institutions and other powerful groups.[4] By studying the cultural products of the mid- to late twentieth century, such as the personal narratives of queer activists of color, we stand to gain a more nuanced social cognizance about the ways that cultural workers devised commentaries about, and strategies for dealing with the systemic structures that threatened the futures of queer youth.

The feminist writer Audre Lorde and the activist researcher Roland Sintos Coloma both reflect on this set of challenges in the prior decades as well as speak to the ways that queer forms of mentorship enabled them to survive and thrive. These two authors provide compelling evidence that queer mentoring can be a remarkable ameliorative phenomenon that manifests in a wide array of interactions. A range of mentoring experiences enabled Coloma and Lorde to navigate through the social morass that threatened their rise to greater heights. Both authors notably foster deeper thinking about mentoring as well as tell their story in an imaginative and sophisticated way. While we may relish the attractive aesthetic elements of these authors' narratives, there are also several gains that come with contextualizing and historicizing these texts, comparing them and linking them to the real struggles that persist in our present day.

Studying the narratives of Coloma and Lorde and their portrayals of struggle can help critics and readers to cultivate further understanding of social vulnerabilities and how these dynamics relate to powerful systems that Coloma and Lorde comment on (such as education, industry, religion, and government, among others). This knowledge will prove generative and useful for educators, parents, and other constituencies who are working in diverse positions beyond the boundaries of the ivory tower, classroom, or conventional campus. Educators, practitioners, and other professionals who work in service positions and the fields of education can deepen their knowledge and refine their critical lenses through recognizing the connections between the intellectual work of Coloma and Lorde and the social problems in the material world. Moreover, by poring over these personal narratives, we deepen our knowledge about how queer forms of mentoring can engender a means to short-circuit the bullying and other forms of social oppression that queer youth of color routinely encounter within a broad range of private and public locales. Looking to the stories of Coloma and Lorde—people who found eventually some success after much personal strife—also enables us to open up the discussion of queer mentoring to more audiences who already take delight in creative and intellectual work of figures like Roland Sintos Coloma and Audre Lorde. While Lorde certainly will have a larger following due to her pioneering efforts in poetry and public activism, Coloma provides an equally significant commentary that confirms the urgency of the issues shown in these texts. Therefore by *coming out* about their queer mentoring experiences, these authors speak to the positive forms of intellectual growth that can (and do) occur in the everyday spaces of queer social spheres.

The Contexts of Queer Mentoring: Situating Social Practices in Discourse and Text

The scholars Margo V. Perkins and Martha M. Watson proffer perspectives on the ways that writing about the personal and the political have far-reaching implications that extend into the larger culture and socio-political realm.[5] Perkins and Watson show that while marginalized populations, such as women of color, historically have been denied opportunities to speak in the public sphere, these groups have managed to intervene in hegemonic discourse by sharing personal stories that contest systems of power and privilege. Queer populations, such as lesbians, have built their activisms on the aforesaid

approaches by similarly utilizing stories of personal struggle and triumph to contest actions that directly and indirectly work against queers of color. This is not to say the struggles of these populations are equivalent, but rather this framework serves as a means of theorizing the historic and varied ways in which people are supporting queer youth of color as well as encouraging youth in a range of artistic and critical contexts. Making sense of these multifaceted developments requires a syncretic approach that builds on viewpoints from several fields of thought, yet due to certain constraints this article mainly will focus on the American contexts that are articulated by Coloma and Lorde. Both of these authors illustrate the social complexities of self-development and what it means to be a queer person of color in the mid- and latter-half of the twentieth century—a time period when the social scourges of homophobia, racism, and sexism colluded against queer youth of color. As Lorde blends her "dreams/myths/histories" and Coloma draws together several fragments of personal writing, these authors create narratives that connote the idea that today's approaches to mentoring young people should be more diversified, integrative, and queerly inclusive.[6]

To begin their stories of personal development, Coloma and Lorde both explain how their parents migrated to the US near the middle of the twentieth century: Lorde is the daughter of Grenadian parents, while Coloma's family is Filipino in ancestry. These origins play substantive roles in shaping the development of youth who are depicted in Lorde's biomythography *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* and Coloma's narrative "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves: A Search for A Place to Call Home."[7] Through their texts' titles, both Coloma and Lorde articulate how they understand themselves as inhabiting multiple identity categories, and in the process they call attention to the problematics of normative processes of categorization. These authors' titles set the stage for their reflections on how their lives have been constituted by more than one cultural origin, as well as by experiences such as class, race, and sexuality. In addition to showing their multiple origins and their titles, Lorde and Coloma further emphasize this underlying idea of mixing by blending various textual forms, thus fostering resistance to the idea that people must conform to limiting categories that constrain and demoralize vulnerable groups like queer youth of color. As Lorde and Coloma utilize these approaches, they reveal the ways that queer youth of color are forced to reckon with technologies of otherness that Western societies have perpetuated through binaristic and rigid systems of gender, heteronormative familialism, and white privilege.[8] To theorize how these authors resist and respond to such issues, we must bring the issue of youth development to the center of the dialogue. By doing so, we will think further about how the texts show a lack of mentorship for youth *and* how this lacuna speaks to the need to build up a queer epistemological practice that empowers queer youth of color.

In tracing the origins of this mentoring lacuna, we must recognize the ways in which many queer people have been identified as a *threat* to youth as well as how this calumny has inhibited the mentoring that could have benefited Coloma and Lorde. Unquestionably, the phenomenon of disconnecting queer people from young Americans has a long history to it, and when we read the writing of Coloma and Lorde, we observe that queer mentoring is by no means a twenty-first century phenomenon, nor is queer mentoring an untested approach.[9] This form of mentoring also does more than simply teach or pass along knowledge. By showing how they connect with mentors, who might address the *queer questions* of youth, I contend Coloma and Lorde enact a form of social activism in an effort to both help themselves as well as inform readers about the ways that queer youth of color can respond to the pressures exerted upon them by the social forces of white heteropatriarchy and class-based oppression. In these authors' cases, the queer questions might be paraphrased as—How do I understand my place in romantic and sexual relationships that are ostensibly distinct from those I see all around me? How do I live

honestly when my parents reject my way of looking at the world and relationships I desire? What do I need to know in order to confront and survive the challenges of homophobic violence? How do I deal with the intersections of homophobia, classism, and racism in my communities?

As Coloma and Lorde ponder such questions, they articulate how they mitigated their suffering by practicing what critics have called the broadening of "the family center." [10] This move entails the inclusion of figures and groups from outside of the biological family to foster the development of youth in the precarious time of adolescent life. This heuristic of *broadening the center* enables integration of resources for youth, as well as provides a means for researchers to theorize how queer youth of color benefit from finding supportive interlocutors who advise, assist, and listen. This notion of *familial broadening* also allows for a rethinking of ingrained kinship relations as well as fostering forms of critical consciousness that are more attuned to the severe challenges that queer youth of color face.[11] Much as activists do, these writers integrated unrelated people into their social sphere, and in so doing, they reveal that having mentors outside the family proves useful because coming out as LGBTQ in the homes of heterosexual parents was especially perilous during the period when Coloma and Lorde grew up—the mid to late twentieth century. As many critics and queer people will attest, revealing one's sexual orientation to a patriarchal family unit holds the potential to jeopardize the youth's familial relationships and safety.[12] According to these writers' narratives and the research of many social scientists, finding supportive mentors and an empathetic social sphere is indispensable in achieving a modicum of happiness, wellness, and a healthy outlook on one's life experience. As Coloma and Lorde make known, some of their better mentoring relations were established with LGBTQ people who were met in social circles outside of their own families such as in schools or radically different communities. Rather than maintaining the ingrained status quo that delineates heterosexual parents or leaders as being the ideal, Coloma and Lorde offer *Other* kinds of mentoring, which allow youth to create a broader set of social possibilities and a hospitable set of outcomes.

Broadening prior concepts of mentoring is imperative insofar as queer youth of color seldom see themselves represented in the conventional modes of learning, such as family rituals, school lessons, extracurricular activities, and church-related functions. In the same way, queer youth of color have reported that the people they envision as being role models, such as actors, celebrities, or public figures, are largely distant and inaccessible in daily life.[13] Similarly in the larger landscape of organizations that provide mentoring to youth outside of the homespace, very few show a deliberate effort to address the questions that queer youth of color are facing. Due to these obstacles, queer youth of color and their supporters are innovating to head off anti-gay and racist threats, producing queer acts of mentoring in a variety of cultural and social forms. Such forms of mentoring range from actions that are carried out by people who resist heteronormative identifiers, to acts of supporting youth who self-identify in queer ways as well as educating readers through queer storylines. Hence to mitigate this deplorable lacuna of mentoring, we must attempt to *queer* (and reimagine) the praxis of mentoring and embrace a more inclusive notion of mentoring for the sake of enabling new futures and explaining the motley ways in which queer youth of color learn about whom they can become.[14] This approach is taken here as queer youth of color draw upon many *informal* kinds of inspiration, learning, and support that come from people who might not exactly fit in the dominant culture's definitions of "mentor." By thinking through these lenses, we can instantiate a more mindful suite of approaches that will assist disadvantaged youth today and tomorrow. To develop such beneficial approaches further, we must consider how critics have contemplated these matters within prior cases and contexts.

Critical Approaches: Linking Dialogues about Mentoring Queer Youth of Color

New and insightful theorizations of mentoring have been developed by scholars, such as Bernadette Marie Calafell, Krishna Pattisapu, and Kathleen F. McConnell, who have shown that professional relations in the field of education can generate a form of mentoring that resembles kinship, suggesting the social spheres of family and education can overlap at times.[15] As these researchers show us, those spheres often are entrenched in heteronormative processes that attempt to police younger generations and maintain hegemonic notions of morality, purity, and respectability. Despite the transitions and efforts being made by many institutions currently, change continues to feel *slow*, which is driving current efforts to create safer spaces for younger generations such as queer youth of color. In these cases, the discourse and phenomena of queer mentoring offer critics a kind of *third space* (other than those of familial or institutional spaces) insofar as it exhibits the potentiality to foster a more fluid, inventive, and hybrid form of experiential growth. As the texts of Coloma and Lorde show queer mentoring to be a mix of approaches, the narratives reinforce this perspective by weaving together a mix of aesthetic and creative choices, which amplify and reify the texts' underlying ideas of mentoring. Notably, both Coloma and Lorde utilize codeswitching, non-normative writing techniques, and paratextual framing in their narratives, which create an unconventional narrative flow that causes readers to reflect on how the texts' elements relate and function as a whole. As Coloma and Lorde expose the problems of learning in formal locations of learning, such as schools, and more hospitable kinds of mentoring that happen outside of the home, they *mentor readers* to think analytically about how inculcated structures shape our opportunities in daily life as well as representations of that life. And as they embrace the non-normative structures of learning within mentoring, they also embrace other non-normative structures in writing that create a mirror effect where the social experience parallels the textual experience significantly. In both their social and textual contexts, elements are mixed and brought into dialogue with one another, thereby creating a richer and multifaceted tapestry of developmental experiences for readers to contemplate.

Through this parallel, Coloma and Lorde create what scholars identify as *hybrid narratives*, which both mix writing formats and make bridges betwixt ostensibly disconnected cultures.[16] Moreover these texts instruct us that—by celebrating and mentoring forms of hybrid selfhood in hybrid narratives—we can convey a more compelling statement about the need to resist processes like daily activities that maintain flawed myths about racial and sexual purity that generate caustic forms of social conformism. In other words, these texts' hybrid forms and lives foster an aesthetic of hybrid resistance that leads readers to move beyond conformist and exclusionary phenomena, including segregation and white supremacy that imperil youth. Previously, scholars Jean Fernandez, Holly E. Martin, and Vivian M. May have theorized hybrid narratives as articulating personal experiences that consist of more than one cultural origin, as well as demonstrate a mixture of writing techniques such as critique, fiction, and poetry.[17]

This embrace of, and proclivity for hybridity is evident from the start of Audre Lorde's narrative *Zami,* where she explains her desire for mixing: "I have always wanted to be both man and woman, to incorporate the strongest and richest parts of my mother and father within/into me [...] My body, a living representation of other life older longer wiser."[18] Similarly in Coloma's narrative "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves," he explains how he perceives his identity in hybrid terms by positing: "I knew that my father had Spanish blood in him, especially since my grandfather looked mestizo. My grandmother from my

mother's side claimed Chinese ancestry."[19] Through these statements, Coloma and Lorde underscore how they celebrate and envision their lives through a discourse of synthesis, and accordingly, they represent this syncretic process through both the text's construction as well as through their learning with a diverse cadre of queer mentors. While a small group of scholars such as Monica B. Pearl have astutely identified some of these phenomena in Lorde's narrative before, the aforesaid links of genre, mentoring, race, and sexuality are less theorized.[20] For example, while scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins and José Esteban Muñoz have theorized the sociopolitical experiences of intersectionality, some questions remain about how the intersections of race and sexuality relate to the mentoring when it arises in the romantic intimacies between younger and older women (like those we observe within Lorde's text *Zami*).[21] As Coloma and Lorde show us in their tales, queer youth of color face more challenges than their white counterparts because they routinely experience marginalization in two major ways (due to racism and homophobia); this problem is by no means new and while some social change has improved living conditions for queer youth of color, there is still great need for mentoring that is more integrative and open-minded.

As Coloma and Lorde challenge earlier and contemporary ideas about mentoring and queer life through their hybrid textualities and socializing, their work conveys a set of relations that I call *the aesthetic of activist sociality*—a concept similar to the scholarly heuristic of "queer sociality," which often is used to theorize today's sexual cultures.[22] This idea of activist sociality is a means of naming the ephemeral interactions, feelings, and thought that people enact when they mentor queer youth of color. These dynamics come into play through hybrid processes, such as acts where people work together to help youth, who face problematically essentialist ideas like the notion that heterosexuality is inherent in youth. To develop this concept further, we can consider how this activism can take on an aesthetic form in writing and how this activist sociality may be capable of fostering beneficial outcomes such as inspiring people to take action, raising awareness about the impact of systemic inequalities, as well as revealing the social struggles unique to the intersectionalities of class, race, and sexuality.

These activist aesthetics of Coloma and Lorde enable youth to contemplate alternative ways of living, hence empowering youth to choose their own mentors in much the same way that queers often *choose* their own forms of family.[23] To be more precise, the writing of Coloma and Lorde can be read as activist interventions because their content and mode of storytelling resemble what many activists call "zaps" or "direct-actions." In the activism of the 1980s and 1990s, the terms "zap" or "direct-action" were used to name actions that interrupt normative processes that bear down on us. The writings of Coloma and Lorde constitute what I call a *textual zap* because these unusual writings discard the human role of being a passive, reverent citizen, and they actively critique the heteronormative principles that contribute to the marginalization of queer people. These authors' life writings act as zappy interventions because much like queer activist groups, such as the prominent AIDS activist group ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), they seek to trouble the status quo of heterosexual white supremacy that has attempted to keep down queers of color or prey upon their communities. While some critics may question the effect that writing has on the larger world—where not everyone always reads—there remains an activist adage that suggests every contribution is a worthwhile one. As Muñoz has shown, seemingly small actions, such as the narration of personal experience, relationships, or other work, can make more long-term ripples in our broader social world, thus eventually creating a profound impact.[24]

In his short autobiographical narrative, Coloma explains how several mentors enabled Coloma to work through these tensions, empowering him to become a contributing

member of his surrounding queer communities as well as make progress in his education. Coloma explains how his activist friends acted like educators for him, saying: "I learned indispensable lessons from and developed meaningful relationships with older student activists […] these mentors and comrades were a source of encouragement and confidence as I ventured into the more visible positions of coordinating a statewide student network."[25] In these words, Coloma reveals how he both held certain privileges in having educational opportunities even as he felt compelled to find mentors, who gave him the strength to excel, confront prejudice, educate, and lead others. As his narrative attests, these mentors enabled Coloma to find purpose and institute an activist sociality through his actions and thought. Today Coloma works in an academic position, specializing in the research of education and Filipino and Asian diasporic experiences. Yet this is not to say that all youth must recognize the paths of Coloma and Lorde as being a so-called queer ideal. Rather, these writers signal to us that helping a youth to resist and survive the fiery strife of homophobia, racism, and other depredation is a necessary activist project that enables queers of color to devise productive future pathways as well as find a means to cope with traumas.[26]

To understand the activist projects of Coloma and Lorde, we can turn to fields of cultural and performance studies, which provide illuminating frameworks for understanding how activist narratives can be used (and understood) as providing a sense of direction for the future. The work of the scholar Margo V. Perkins again offers context concerning the ways in which activists have deployed nonfiction narratives to achieve political goals as well as to create a hospitable future.[27] As Perkins shows, black activist women writers from the 1960s generated social awareness and inspired audiences through narrating their struggles within a world that continually privileges whiteness and heterosexual male figures above everyone else. This research reveals how some activists gain an influential position and leave a profound impact on readers that can have long-lasting and life-changing results. In her study of these activists' writings, Perkins explains:

> Activists use life writing to create themselves as well as the era they recount. Many things are at stake for them in this process. These things include control of the historical record, control over their own public images, and control over how the resistance movement in which they are involved is defined and portrayed.[28]

Much as Perkins suggests, Coloma and Lorde illustrate their strong positionality as experts and participants in the social issues through their narration of both daily activities and their long-term involvement in social justice movements. Through such writing, the activist becomes an agent of change who holds the power to transform socio-political realities for the betterment of humanity. Notably in the beginning of Lorde's narrative, she speaks of compatriots who lent their "power" to her, showing her gratitude to those who enabled her to gain a form of agency and place in the civic dialogue.[29] This same idea comes through in Coloma's narrative as well as his personal website, whereby he points to how he has been "committed to the principles and practices of education for diversity and social justice."[30] In his words, Coloma demonstrates how educators, students, and writers can exhibit leadership in the face of seemingly insurmountable issues, such as college campus policy, for the sake of advancing positive forms of transformation.

In the the early twenty-first century, the scholarship of Krishna Pattisapu and Bernadette Marie Calafell vocalizes an analytical and reflective perspective on the robust potentials of relational experiences between academics involved in mentoring activities, demonstrating how collaborations, conversations, and relationships can enable youth to have an efflorescence of self-development and social advancement. As in the aforementioned research above, Pattisapu and Calafell call attention to how pursuing

informative advisers can lead to positive results such as extending one's collegial network, which can strengthen personal resolve and lead to the creation of new opportunities that were once ostensibly unavailable or impossible. In their study of academic environs and how they relate to queer experiences, Pattisapu and Calafell explain:

> We argue through dialogue we establish powerful coalitions with families of choice whom help us to queerly navigate pedagogical contexts that attempt to silence and erase us. We believe that the likelihood that queer people and people of color will achieve academic success relies significantly on the establishment of relationships with strong mentors within and across identity lines.[31]

Pattisapu and Calafell illustrate that by concatenating experienced professionals with the next generation, we develop new pathways and find strengths that are needed to make progress. This is not to say that mentoring will solve all social ills or ameliorate deeply entrenched ways of thinking that privilege certain social formations—such as heteronormative familial dynamics—but these mentoring dialogues are a means to jumpstart alternative social realities and mutually agreeable collaborations. To consider these endeavors in another way, we can theorize that this collaborative project is actually a kind of hybrid endeavor that brings Coloma and Lorde into greater dialogue with one another. Through this comparative project, we discern the authors' work as offering a productive example of the ways we can collaborate innovatively, and in the process, they bespeak several helpful ways of thinking about personal growth in quotidian environments that are often inhospitable to marginalized groups like queer youth of color.

Audre Lorde Speaks *Out*: Finding Queer Mentors in Unexpected Places

Of the two writers considered here, the one who has challenged sexual and textual conventions most famously is the late American poet Audre Lorde, who also has worked as a stalwart activist, instructor, and librarian. Lorde unflinchingly offered critiques of the US status quo in her artistic expressions and essays—much of which has similarities with protest art. Her zappy and integrative pieces lead us to consider the implications of the societal structures which maintain standards that shore up the privilege of the upper-class and light-skinned populations. Her work also offers readers an eye-opening and sobering perspective on the potentialities of art. This becomes clearer in an interview that Lorde participated in during the 1980s where she spoke about the intentional relationship between her artistry and activism in an interview. She explains:

> So the question of social protest and art is inseparable for me. I can't say it is an either-or proposition. Art for art's sake doesn't really exist for me. […] what was beautiful had to serve the purpose of changing my life, or I would have died. If I cannot air this pain and alter it, I will surely die of it. That's the beginning of social protest.[32]

Art and protest are shown to be unified and hybrid within these words in much the same way as Lorde experiences a personal form of cultural hybridity in her ancestry. Moreover this linkage of art and protest is a means to "air this pain," which holds the potential to "alter" the struggle of her own life. While Lorde has highlighted the importance of bringing social change to the public sphere, I contend that her stories about her home and private relations are equally important because they show how the early and intimate dimensions of her life drove her to wish for a kind of belonging and connectivity in places outside of the domestic sphere.[33] This wish becomes particularly visible as Lorde departs from her

familial home at the age of seventeen when she realizes her desire for freedom from the constraints of her strait-laced, religious mother.[34]

While Audre also shares positive memories of her mother, including how her mother's Grenadian traditions shaped her, readers ultimately perceive the mother's social conservatism as it conflicts with Audre's personal politics. She explains her mother's disdain for unconventionality by saying: "No deviation was allowed from her [mother's] interpretations of correct."[35] Her sharp term "deviation" speaks to the tension that reached a fever pitch during her sophomore year, and regarding this moment Audre says, "I often felt that I had died and wakened up in a hell called home […] My mother responded to these changes in me as if I were a foreign hostile."[36] In this instance, Audre breaks from the notion that the home space is a place of happiness, safety, and well-being. While zapping readers to think about what it means to be persona non grata, Audre tells how she turns to her friends "the Branded," who are also ostracized. She describes them:

> We were the Branded, the Lunatic Fringe, proud of our outrageousness and our madness, our bizarre-colored inks and quill pens. We learned how to mock the straight set, and how to cultivate our group paranoia into instinct for self-protection […] *How meager the sustenance was I gained from the four years I spent in high school; yet, how important that sustenance was to my survival.*[37]

Audre's sustenance was her network of friends that enabled her to endure and overcome the daily "pain and rejection" that accompanied her high school life as an "outsider."[38] At this early point in Audre's life, she had yet to self-identify as lesbian outwardly, yet she encodes herself here as countercultural, or queerly in contrast to the heterosexual "squares."[39] The Branded can be read as an instance of activist sociality because for Audre, these friends intervene in the pain of her loneliness, delivering a caring and loving form of peer-mentoring.[40] Like many mentors, these friends bolster Audre but they neither talk down to her, nor vitiate her. Their relations more so resemble a bricolage of caring acts and thought. Indeed, the scholars Bernadette Marie Calafell and Kate Willink have theorized that at times mentoring relies on the affect of care and love, demonstrating that such acts have cerebral and emotional depths that merit consideration.[41] These writers' texts encapsulate the emotional support that is needed to survive the innumerable challenges of everyday stresses. In this same vein, the acts of the Branded in Lorde's story can be read as creating a significant affective apparatus because they build their sociality on a kind of love that enables them to contest some of the inequalities and marginalization that comes about in the often troubled social relations of many school systems.[42] Later when she moves out of her home, Lorde begins to share a living space with her Branded friends, and by living with these supporters, she lives in a more socially healthy and collaborative way.

Lorde's personal writing corroborates the research that suggests social networks and mentoring can empower and guard the futures of young people. Let us consider how the critic Jean E. Rhodes explains that: "mentoring and other youth programs can protect them [youth] against negative choices and support their healthy development."[43] Rhodes's words ring true in the context of Lorde's writing because, as we see in her work, a mentor helps Lorde to explore her queerness in the Mexican city of Cuernavaca. While she travels to Mexico, Lorde meets a group of lesbian women who offer much-needed camaraderie and encouragement. In particular, she meets an older white American lesbian by the name of Eudora, who helps Lorde to learn about both the local area and what it means to be lesbian. Eudora's role is that of a mentor, and despite the generational difference, Eudora engages Lorde in conversation, thus coming to occupy a special place in Lorde's heart. In the text, Lorde explains this friendship and hopes:

I planned to leave when school was over, and secretly, more and more, hoped she [Eudora] could come with me. Despite all the sightseeing I had done, and all the museums and ruins I had visited, and the books I had read, it was Eudora who opened those doors for me leading to the heart of this country and its people. It was Eudora who showed me the way to the Mexico I had come looking for, that nourishing land of light and color where I was somehow at home.[44]

Though Audre had come to Mexico to explore and learn the Spanish language at a school, we see that she develops herself through her friendship with Eudora. That is to say, as Eudora and Audre become more familiar, Audre expands her horizons, even though Eudora creates certain tensions due to her excessive consumption of alcohol. Nevertheless, Lorde wishes for Eudora to travel with her, and this shows that the two women developed a powerful social bond, which evinces the intimacy of family or a partnership. Lorde reiterates this idea later in the text, when she explains, "I had learned from Eudora how to take care of business, be dyke-proud, how to love and live to tell the story, and with flair."[45] In her words, we see Eudora was not only a source of support for Lorde, but also an educator with regard to what it means to be able to stand on one's own.

This conflation of lover and mentor reinforces the critical perspectives of researchers, such as Thomas Simmons and Margaret Wooster Freeman, who demonstrate the ways that desire and learning are imbricated in diverse cultural contexts.[46] In the matters of desire and learning, impulses of curiosity and hope for completion can often draw the mentee closer to the mentor, creating an intimacy that constitutes the self in hybrid ways. Yet when Lorde's relationship with Eudora breaks apart—due to Eudora's excessive drinking (and she desires to finish her college education)—Lorde ultimately returns to New York. At that moment, the US Supreme Court had decided against racial segregation, and the fear-mongering machine of Joseph McCarthy was censured officially by the US Senate.[47] In this transformational moment, Lorde herself shows how she experiences several forms of self-development, including new social and romantic relations with women that stimulate personal and social growth. She explains, "Every woman I have ever loved has left her print upon me."[48] In a rather physical way, her statement indicates her identity is an amalgam (or hybrid formation) of both herself and these women who "feed me like corn before labor."[49] This nurturing form of sociality sustains Lorde, and by sharing this feeling, she uncovers a path that invites other young queers of color to chart their own ways.

Coloma's Mix of Fragments and Friends: Networking *Out of the Home*

In recent research about the lives of queer people of color, scholars have demonstrated there are benefits to crafting projects that link the genres of critical perspectives and personal narratives. The scholarship of Bernadette Marie Calafell again provides helpful context for thinking about the ways in which the hybrid narratives of Coloma and Lorde offer us critical perspectives in both artistic and personal ways.[50] Historically, much academic publishing has aimed to remove the "I" from critical perspectives, however as Calafell elucidates, personal stories can provide compelling evidence for addressing both quotidian issues as well as larger institutional and theoretical problems. In a very similar way, Coloma's own personal narrative integrates the personal and the analytical by narrativizing the ways that several friends advised, tutored, and invited him to join their groups, which had numerous social benefits for him.[51] This support was necessary while Coloma and his family were coming to terms with one another's dissimilar feelings on matters of Coloma's sexual orientation. Coloma's essay bears a striking resemblance to

Lorde's own work insofar as Coloma sutures together several parts of his life through writing three well-developed "fragments," which speak to his experiences of personal struggle with overcoming family strife and searching for "a place to call home."[52] This desire for a "home" calls attention to the feeling of homelessness that many queers of color experience due to the exclusions they face in both the queer and white cultural contexts that they inhabit. By articulating these fraught circumstances, Coloma mentors his readers about the need to deal with these familial and social dynamics in a way that will create options for queer youth of color.

Coloma's three fragments also reflect three moments of Coloma's life, yet they add up to a larger social trajectory in which Coloma discusses how he came see himself as an activist and how he gained a "critical consciousness" from several queer Filipino men as well as others who "represented a strong political voice."[53] In this manner, his queer support system provided support that helped him grow personally, as well as enabled him to help his surrounding Asian American and Pacific American communities to grow. Hence while some critics might assume that his mix of textual fragments and "multiple selves" might imply a troubling disunity, perspicacious readers will observe a larger story arc in which Coloma's mingling with various groups ultimately grants him a critical and hybrid perspective on what must be done to empower queer students of color.[54] Like the mixing of critique, poetry, and narrative in Lorde's hybrid biomythography, Coloma imbricates social critique with a story of domestic realism, creating a textual zap that interrupts the notion that a son should always follow in his father's footsteps and continue the family's legacy. Coloma's zap urges us to consider the benefits of accepting social change and cultural diversity, including that of diverse sexual cultures in the familial sphere.

Like Audre Lorde and many queer people, Coloma is hesitant to tell his family about his bisexual sense of self because he worries that his utterance of bisexuality could lead to a snap-judgment or something worse. Yet despite Coloma's concerns, his biological family actually demonstrates social support for him after he has revealed his secret, even though his family is still unprepared for how this interior sense of self might shape his future. Instead of accepting his family's lack of knowledge as being an impassable challenge, Coloma forges a new path and uses this moment as a chance to mentor his uninformed intimates about his reality. He explains:

> Surprisingly, my family was supportive, although my parents were concerned about my health status and partner choice as well as the negative social and professional consequences. Initially, they hypothesized that my conscious departure from Catholicism, my infrequent church attendance, and the geographical distance between me and my family contributed to my 'confusion.' They thought I went astray because the […] family no longer guided me.[55]

Coloma's wording of "confusion," which is highlighted through his use of quotation marks, is a technique that both connotes his parents' conventional viewpoint, as well as reveals Coloma's own approach to his parents. Instead of lambasting his parents for framing his sense of self as *confused*, he is considerate of the learning curve that comes with the realities of *mentoring* an older, more traditional generation about the complexities of sexual identity. To a similar extent, it is notable that Coloma's parents perceive his absence as being the cause of his "confusion," thus calling attention to the myth that the bonds created in the domestic sphere have a role in (re)producing heterosexuality. However, he explains to us that after having "sat down with them," they arrive at a mutual understanding that is "supportive of my choices, relationships and happiness."[56] What these scenes reveal is the ameliorative potential of intervening in familial tensions and disrupting what scholars have called the "heteronarrative" of modern writing.[57] Instead of

maintaining a wall of silence, which activists have shown to be lethal, the family members create a bridge and hybrid understanding between their differing views.

Unlike Lorde's relationship with her mother, Coloma mostly reconciles with his parents, and in so doing, he educates readers that queers are never a threat to the familial sphere. Indeed, Coloma's textual propensity towards education is representative of the way that many queer stories operate as a kind of infotainment, educating the public about queer matters that must be heard—especially if any form of social progress is to be made. Equally, the scholarship of José Esteban Muñoz, has shown how queer stories, such as that of Pedro Zamora, has functioned as a form of public pedagogy.[58] The need for such public pedagogy is especially pressing because, as Coloma suggests, not everyone will have parents that accept them as his do. Coloma says, "I knew I was one of the few fortunate ones. Some of my bisexual, transgender, lesbian, and gay friends had related disastrous coming-out stories to me. A few chose not to reveal their sexual and gender orientations to their family, fearing negative consequences."[59] Coloma's language here shows the dismal possibilities that some queers face in their moments of coming-out. This potentiality is also what motivates Coloma to find queer sociality: "I knew I would have the support of my 'family' of friends in southern California."[60] Although Coloma places the word in quotation marks to highlight his innovative usage of the term, he nonetheless shows how his gay-friendly allies helped when he was unable to be upfront about his sexuality. In this instance, I interpret Coloma's quotation marks not as a means of diminishing his queer-supportive network, but rather to highlight the improvised sociality of these relations. These quotation marks also point to the absence of queer-specific terminology for the activist sociality that he creates with his friends. Unsurprisingly, this same absence has led to the innovative creation of other terms for queer mentors, including that of "drag mother" and "leather daddy," among others.

As queer cultural critics, such as Tom Donaghy and Shilpa Mehta have noted, queers have struggled without mentors (and without a coherent lexicon) because of the weighty silence imposed on them by their cultures' heterosexual patriarchal order.[61] For example, Donaghy insists, "gays rarely find mentors in their families. Even if we grew up with our fathers, those fathers generally weren't gay, removing a fundamental level of connection."[62] As Donaghy's words imply, the dynamic at work in Coloma's text is created by a pressing need to find support systems, such as role models, who could help queer youth to find positive paths towards self-determination. Notably, Coloma explains that his life as an activist proved pivotal in shaping his path in life:

> "I learned indispensible lessons from and developed meaningful friendships with older activists, a few of whom were Asian American and Pacific Islander queer men and queer-positive women. These Asian American and Pacific Islander queer and queer-positive radicals raised my critical consciousness."[63]

In Coloma's case, his friends enable him to scrutinize his circumstances and his relations to the world around him. Coloma's enclave of queer activists provides him with a mentoring sphere that empowers him to critique other forms of social oppression around him such as "institutionalized racism."[64] His queer mentoring group allows for the creation of multiple activisms, and in this way, Coloma shows that colleagues and friends are by no means inferior or less influential than biological kin. As such, he endorses a much less traditional model of affective and social support, implying that queer-friendly youth groups and queer-friendly role models are needed for the purpose of fostering younger generations.

Crafting social groups that can mentor and support queer youth of color like Coloma must be a high priority for this century's activists, educators, families, leaders, and others. To

understand such mentoring groups, we can turn to the work of scholars like Karma R. Chávez who has observed that social justice groups, such as Coloma's band of supportive mentors, can benefit from the kind of coalition-building that reaches out to multiple parties.[65] In other words, Chávez tells that successful coalitions are made by drawing together people of multiple talents, making what might be called a hybrid coalition. This same coalitional idea is addressed near the end of Coloma's narrative, where he explains his efforts to unite people across the spectrum:

> My bold attempts to raise topics of sexuality among people of color or issues of racism in queer groups have been met with quizzical looks, blatant denial, or patronizing dismissal […] I do not prioritize my identities or claim to speak for the communities I belong to. I am limited in my own experiences, readings and interactions with others. Yet I search continuously for better understanding, linkage, cooperation, and harmony.[66]

Although his narrative is now over ten years old, his coming-of-age story nevertheless speaks to the contemporary challenges that many activists still encounter today, where some groups have yet to work collectively to address systemic problems that transcend identity categories. Such coalition-building has potential to foster more effective and varied means of mentoring queer youth of color, yet of course much more work remains to be done within (and across) the many tiers of social organizing, civic action, and educational reform. What appears pivotal is—activists and writers must persist and hold themselves to fostering a sense of queer futurity, which can provide some hope for the future. As Muñoz suggests, such a belief in this future is needed due to the fact that he and myriad critics continue to perceive our present culture and politics to be socially "poisonous" for many queer cultures within the US and beyond.[67]

Conclusion: Imagining and Safeguarding *Other* Paths through Mentoring

In theorizing the provocative narratives of Coloma and Lorde, certain conceptual relationships between hybridity and other tropes reveal the sophisticated craftsmanship that intermingles with two coming of age stories. This sophisticated hybrid experience is created by bringing together a diverse cadre of mentors for the sake of finding a support system for addressing the deplorable social effects caused by homophobia, racism, and sexism. Likewise, we can surmise that this hybridity in the authors' textual constructions has a similar intent—to address social problems in creative ways that spur new modes of thinking and generate new ideas instead of mandating particularities. At the same time, it must be noted that these authors' hybrid narratives never create (nor intend) a sense of wholeness or completion that resembles a cure-all to these life writers' problems. Rather, these pieces show there is a partial quality to these stories (i.e. we only hear small segments of certain life moments), and the implication is that unity and wholeness may be unnecessary in activist projects of mentoring.[68] Thus rather than maintaining the ingrained biopolitics of family and other social modalities, such as heterosexual reproduction, these narratives create a novel synthesis that raises up the social intimacies and passing of knowledge between people, who are not related to one another by blood. In doing so, these authors' efforts enable us to think beyond the cruel and ingrained beliefs that queer people are stunted or hopeless deviants who have no (reproductive) future. Quite to the contrary, these writers state and suggest that queers of color have futurity, and these queer people indeed deserve to have access to the resources and support that would allow people to flourish.

To mitigate the caustic conditions that queer youth face, we should take stock of the lessons shared through the narratives of Roland Sintos Coloma and Audre Lorde. These

authors' stories challenge the persistent myth that development and learning best take place in the nuclear family unit. Instead of upholding the idea that father knows best, Coloma and Lorde tell us that queer youth of color can benefit from embracing the activist sociality that arises in mentoring activities of queer collaborations, dialogues, relationships, and textual zaps. In the spirit of activist pursuits, we must learn to transgress boundaries that exist between cultural identities, and in so doing, mentoring coalitions can work together to aid queer youth of all cultures. Such mentoring relations offer a bevy of routes towards the future, yet as we take to the connectivities of mentor-mentee relations, we also should be mindful of the allure of seeing mentoring as a cure-all to the problems created by classist, heteronormative, and racist formations. As Coloma and Lorde tell, mentoring relations can fall apart—as in the case of Audre's intimacy with Eudora—which nevertheless leads us to learn from their challenges. Like in many other postmodern tales, the unities of the past will come apart at times, but not all is lost in the process of this fragmentation. From their relationship's disintegration, rises the poetic phoenix Audre, who ultimately mentors her readers to seek out knowledge and be tenacious in the face of socio-political adversity.

In terms of narrative, the scholars Bernadette Marie Calafell and Richard G. Jones elucidate how personal stories can empower people to address the "master narratives that shape and proscribe us."[69] In effect, personal narratives enable us to intervene in injustice, leading queer youth to perceive a wider variety of possibilities for designing their own paths. As Coloma and Lorde instruct, it behooves us to think like an activist and utilize the resources of our queer social spheres, which provide platforms for development and insights. These queer social spheres grant us the means to craft a new bricolage of social learning, which allows us to look beyond the inculcated educational approaches that often inhibit innovative thinking. Developing such possible futures is dependent on several things, such as looking beyond heteronarratives, creating a culture that supports queer mentoring, and recognizing that queer youth of color also hold the potential to mentor others about what they need. To advance this culture of mentoring, we should neither presume old forms of learning to be superior, nor discount our influence on one another. Consequently, we should imagine the social relations of queer mentoring in a more hybrid and multi-faceted way, nurturing formations that can exist and thrive beyond the confines of problematic myths that undermine our cultures. Hence by embracing the synthesis taking place in our lives and all around us, we will be creating a more just social sphere that is better prepared to foster the development, self-determination, and well-being of queer youth of color.

Notes

1. Dominique Johnson and Billie Gastic, "Natural Mentoring in the Lives of Sexual Minority Youth," *Journal of Community Psychology* 43, no. 4 (2015): 395-407; Michael Sadowski, "Foundations of Queer Voice: Silence and Support in Schools, Communities, Families and Society," in *In a Queer Voice: Journeys of Resilience from Adolescence to Adulthood* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013); Christina M. Van Puymbroeck, "The Mentoring Web: A Model To Increase Retention of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Undergraduates," Research Report #14-01 (Counseling Center: University of Maryland, 2001), archived in US Department of Education Educational Resources Information Center, accessed April 19, 2016, http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED456716.pdf; Christopher J. Alexander, "Mentoring for Gay and Lesbian Youth," *Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 10, no. 2 (January 1, 1999): 89-92. ↩

2. Like the scholar Siobhan Somerville, I utilize the term "queer" to refer to the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and other

sexual minority people. I also use "queer" to unite sexualities under one sign for the purpose of speaking about the way that several groups experience similar conditions. See: Siobhan B. Somerville, "Queer," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, eds. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 187. ↩

3. See, for instance: Jill Capuzzo, "Pressured School District Reverses, Allowing Play on Murder of Gay Student," *New York Times* 11 Aug. 2007: B3, accessed May 12, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/11/nyregion/11laramie.html; Steven Greenhouse, "Texas School District Is Sued Over A Gay-Straight Club," *The New York Times* 2 Feb. 2003: 20, accessed: May 12, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/02/us/texas-school-district-is-sued-over-a-gay-straight-club.html. ↩

4. Karma R. Chávez, "ACT UP, Haitian Migrants and Alternative Memories of HIV/AIDS," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98, no. 1 (2012): 63-68; Stewart Landers, Jim Pickett, Leo Rennie, Steve Wakefield, "Community Perspectives on Developing a Sexual Health Agenda for Gay and Bisexual Men" *AIDS and Behavior* (2011): 101-106. ↩

5. Margo V. Perkins, *Autobiography as Activism: Three Black Women of the Sixties* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 10; Martha Watson, *Lives of Their Own: Rhetorical Dimensions in the Autobiographies of Women Activists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999). ↩

6. Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (New York: The Crossing Press, 1982), no pagination. ↩

7. Roland Sintos Coloma, "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves: In Search of a Place to Call Home," in *Restoried Selves: Autobiographies of Queer Asian/Pacific American Activists*, ed. Kevin Kumashiro (New York: Haworth, 2004). ↩

8. Sue Golding, *The Eight Technologies of Otherness* (New York: Routledge, 1997). ↩

9. Jim Elledge and David Groff, *Who's Yer Daddy? Gay Writers Celebrate Their Mentors and Forerunners* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012). ↩

10. Linda Stone Fish and Rebecca G. Harvey, *Nurturing Queer Youth* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), 207. ↩

11. While some critics may not see the discourse of "the family" as being a propitious idiom in queer contexts, many LGBTQ people continue to utilize the concepts of family as a means to explain their social relations. The history of this debate is a lengthy and a provocative dialogue, yet due to constraints it cannot be addressed at length here. See: Katie L. Acosta, *Amigas y Amantes: Sexually Nonconforming Latinas Negotiate Family* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013) 131. ↩

12. Gary Remafedi, *Death by Denial: Studies of Suicide in Gay and Lesbian Teenagers* (Boston: Alyson Books, 1994). ↩

13. Jason D. P. Bird, Lisa Kuhns, and Robert Garofalo, "The Impact of Role Models on Health Outcomes for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 50 (2012): 353-357. ↩

14. Ellen D. B. Riggle and Sharon Rostosky, *A Positive View of LGBTQ: Embracing Identity and Cultivating Well-being* (Lanham: Roman and Littlefield, 2014), 109-115. ↩

15. Kathleen F. McConnell, "Connective Tissue, Critical Ties: Academic Collaboration as a Form and Ethics of Kinship," *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 8, no. 5 (2012): 12-29; Krishna Pattisapu and Bernadette Marie Calafell, "(Academic) Families of Choice: Queer Relationality, Mentoring, and Critical Communication Pedagogy," in *Identity and Communication Research: Intercultural Reflections and Future Directions*, eds. Nilanjana Bardhan and Mark Orbe (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 51-67. ↩

16. Jean Fernandez, "Hybrid Narratives: The Making of Character and Narrative Authority in Rudyard Kipling's 'His Chance in Life,'" *Victorian Literature and Culture* 36, no. 2 (2008): 343; Holly E. Martin, *Writing Between Cultures: A Study of Hybrid Writing in Ethnic Literature of the United States* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company Inc., 2011); Vivian M. May, "Thinking from the Margins, Acting at the Intersections: Anna Julia Cooper's *A Voice from the South*," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 19, no. 2 (2004). ↩

17. While recognizing that some critics believe texts are recognizable as particular genres, other critics believe clear lines between genres cannot be drawn due to the ways that such labeling can be arbitrary and limiting. ↩

18. Lorde, *Zami*, 7. ↩

19. Coloma, "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves," 19. ↩

20. Monica B. Pearl, "'Sweet Home': Audre Lorde's *Zami* and the Legacies of American Writing," *Journal of American Studies* 43, no. 2 (2009). ↩

21. For discussions of intersectionality see: Patricia Hill Collins, "It's All In the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race and Nation," *Hypatia* 13, no. 3 (1998): 62-82; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991): 2141-99; Shinsuke Eguchi, "Cross-National Identity Transformation: Becoming a Gay 'Asian-American' Man," *Sexuality and Culture* 15 (2011): 31; José Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999). ↩

22. Juana María Rodríguez, "Queer Sociality and Other Sexual Fantasies," *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 17, no. 2-3 (2011): 331-348; Shaka McGlotten, *Virtual Intimacies: Media, Affect and Queer Sociality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013). ↩

23. Kath Weston, *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). ↩

24. José Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 128. ↩

25. Coloma, "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves," 24-25. ↩

26. Kyung-Hee Choi, Jay Paul, George Ayala, Ross Boylan, and Steven E. Gregorich, "Experiences of Discrimination and Their Impact on the Mental Health Among African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Latino Men Who Have Sex With Men," *American Journal of Public Health* 103, no. 5 (March 2013): 1-7; Brian Mustanski, Robert Garofalo, and Erin Emerson, "Mental Health Disorders Psychological Distress and Suicidality in a Diverse Sample of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth," *American Journal of Public Health* 100, no. 12 (December 2010): 2426-32. ↩

27. Perkins, *Autobiography as Activism,* 10. ↩

28. Ibid., xiii. ↩

29. Lorde, *Zami*, 3. ↩

30. Roland Sintos Coloma, "Summary," Linkedin, accessed on May16, 2016, http://www.linkedin.com/in/roland-sintos-coloma-692872100. ↩

31. Pattisapu and Calafell, "(Academic) Families of Choice," 65. ↩

32. Audre Lorde, "Audre Lorde," in *Black Women Writers at Work: Conversations*, ed. Claudia Tate (New York: Continuum, 1983), 108. ↩

33. To distinguish between the textual persona of Audre Lorde and her authorial self, I will refer to the persona as "Audre," while calling the author "Lorde." ⮐
34. Pearl, "'Sweet Home': Audre Lorde's *Zami*," 300-301. ⮐
35. Lorde, *Zami*, 24. ⮐
36. Ibid., 83-84. ⮐
37. Ibid., 82 ⮐
38. Ibid. ⮐
39. Ibid., 81. ⮐
40. Ibid., 106. ⮐
41. Richie Neil Hao, Bryant Keith Alexander, Bernadette Marie Calafell, Kate Willink, Amy Kilgard, and John T. Warren, "Building Community in the Academy Through Mentoring: Reflections and Directions." *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 8, no. x5 (2012): 41-2. ⮐
42. Lorde, *Zami*, 82. ⮐
43. Jean E. Rhodes, *Stand by Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 123. ⮐
44. Lorde, *Zami*, 170. ⮐
45. Ibid., 209. ⮐
46. See Margaret Wooster Freeman, "'Efforts of Affection': Mentorship and Friendship in Moore and Bishop," in *American Literary Mentors*, eds. Irene Goldman-Price and Melissa McFarland Pennell (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1999), 147-160; Thomas Simmons, *Erotic Reckonings: Mastery and Apprenticeship in the Work of Poets and Lovers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). ⮐
47. Lorde, *Zami*, 172. ⮐
48. Ibid., 255. ⮐
49. Ibid., 256. ⮐
50. Bernadette Marie Calafell, "Mentoring and Love: An Open Letter," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 7, no. 4 (2007): 425-441. ⮐
51. Coloma, "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves," 23. ⮐
52. Ibid., 19. ⮐
53. Ibid., 25. ⮐
54. Ibid., 19. ⮐
55. Ibid., 26. ⮐
56. Ibid. ⮐
57. Judith Roof, *Come As You Are: Sexuality and Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 161. ⮐
58. Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 143-160. ⮐
59. Coloma, "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves," 26. ⮐
60. Ibid., 25. ⮐
61. See: Tom Donaghy, "Mentors Needed," *OUT* 15, no. 7 (January 2007): 42-46; Shilpa Mehta, "Mulling It Over: Lesbian Role Models," *Hot Wire: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 7, no. 3 (September 1991): 44. ⮐
62. Tom Donaghy, "Mentors Needed," 42. ⮐
63. Coloma, "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves," 24. ⮐
64. Ibid. ⮐
65. Karma R. Chávez, *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013). ⮐

66. Coloma, "Fragmented Entries, Multiple Selves," 28. ↩

67. Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 30. ↩

68. Dr. Kevin Kumashiro speaks to this matter of "partial stories" in his provocative Preface to *Restoried Selves: Autobiographies of Queer Asian / Pacific American Activists.* (Kevin Kumashiro, "Preface," *Restoried Selves: Autobiographies of Queer Asian / Pacific American Activists,* ed. Kevin Kumashiro (Binghamton: Harrington Park Press, 2004) xxv. ↩

69. Richard G. Jones and Bernadette Marie Calafell, "Contesting Neoliberalism Through Critical Pedagogy, Intersectional Reflexivity and Personal Narrative: Queer Tales of Academia," *Journal of Homosexuality* 59, no. 7 (2012): 962. ↩

👤 **Bio**

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Edward Chamberlain researches how artists and intellectuals represent social struggle in American, Caribbean and transnational cultural contexts. His research explains how vulnerable populations, such as LGBTQ youth, respond to the experiences of inequality and well-being in written and visual narratives. His research articles have been published in the journals *English Language Notes*, *CLCWeb*, and *Otherness*.